



## Franklinville schools awarded \$6.8M grant to expand mental health services



*The Franklinville Central School and Ten Broeck Academy campus on North Main Street.*

FRANKLINVILLE — The Franklinville Central School District Monday announced its selection as one of 39 lead educational agencies nationwide to receive the highly competitive School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) Grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The SBMH Grant Program is designed to increase the number, diversity and capacity of school-based mental health professionals by supporting high-quality training programs and strong partnerships between school districts and institutions of higher education.

“This grant represents a transformational opportunity for our students, families and community,” said Don Putnam, Superintendent of Franklinville Central School District. “By expanding access to school-based mental health services while also building a strong, local pipeline of future professionals, we are not only meeting the needs of today, we are investing in the long-term well-being of our region.”

Through this initiative, Franklinville Central School District will lead a regional consortium that includes districts across Allegany County, including Belfast and Cuba-Rushford school districts, and Cattaraugus County, including Ellicottville and West Valley school districts. In addition, the consortium welcomes partner schools Lyons, Romulus, Rush-Henrietta, Geneva, Newark, Williamson, Wayland-Cohocton, Greece, East Irondequoit, Gates Chili, Waterloo and Canisteo-Greenwood. Together, these districts will work to expand access to comprehensive, school-based mental health services for students and families.

As part of the grant, Franklinville and its partner districts will collaborate with Nazareth University and Alfred University to place graduate-level school psychology interns in schools beginning in the next academic year. These interns, supervised by licensed professionals, will provide a full continuum of services, including Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), individual and small-group counseling and early intervention supports to address students' mental health needs.

To strengthen both immediate capacity and long-term sustainability, the grant includes a comprehensive workforce development strategy led by the New York State Mental Health Alliance (NYSMHA). NYSMHA will design and implement a dual-credit Grow Your Own (GYO) Behavioral Health Pathway to create a local pipeline of future mental health professionals. Through this pathway, high school students will participate in career-connected coursework, dual enrollment opportunities, and early exposure to behavioral health careers, building interest and access to the profession within participating communities.

NYSMHA will also provide structured coaching and mentorship for Collective Care Team professionals to support retention and professional growth. In partnership with Peaceful Schools, the project will deliver targeted training to school psychologists and professional learning experiences aligned with trauma-informed care, interdisciplinary practice, and effective school-based mental health service delivery.

In addition, the initiative will incorporate pediatric integration efforts, strengthening collaboration between schools and healthcare providers to better align mental health and early intervention supports. This approach will help ensure more coordinated, responsive care for students and families across systems. Interns and supervisors will be supported through dedicated coordination and ongoing professional learning, including innovative training experiences such as the responsible use of artificial intelligence and simulation-based practice to enhance clinical decision-making and real-world application.

"This work ensures that every student has access to the support they need to succeed both in and out of the classroom," Putnam said.

Franklinville Central School District and its regional partners are committed to building sustainable systems that strengthen the mental health workforce and improve student access to care. This investment represents a significant step forward in ensuring that every student has access to the support they need to learn, grow, and thrive.